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THE DAY-DREAMER.

THE DAY-DREAMER.

THE

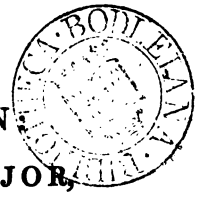
DAY DREAMER,

A Poem.

BY

VIGILUS SOMNOZA.

" Come pintor che con esemplo pinga,
Designerei com 'io m' addormentai."—DANTE.



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1834.

590.

LONDON: PRINTED BY W. NICOL, 51, PALL MALL.

DEDICATION

TO

SOPORA.

Joy !—maiden of the bright, black eye, whose locks
Twine in rich braids of ebon loveliness,—
Now, and for ever, joy !—Ah, me, it mocks
Each studious effort of the pen to trace,
In thought or word, the lustre of thy face,
Light, with the more than jewel'd blaze of mind !—
Sweet, black-eye'd maiden, but one glance express—
Oh, but *one* glance, benevolent and kind,
Nor spurn this harp-strung dream with which thy name
[is twin'd.
Nay—nor disdain one gracious smile to beam
On me !—'Tis many a day since last we met—
Since last my raptur'd eye, as on some dream,
Look'd upon thee !—Alas, that eye was wet—
Indeed, the tear of sorrow hangs there yet !
Even the dagger of thy last farewell
Nestles, corroding, in my breast:—but let
The balmy influence of thy smile dispel,
Joy-beaming maid, a pang, which thou, alone, canst
[quell !

LONDON: PRINTED BY W. NICOL, 51, PALL MALL.

THE DAY-DREAMER,

BY

VIGILUS SOMNOZA.

PREFACE.

THE reader who shall take the trouble to peruse a few stanzas of this (may it be called?) poem, will perceive, by the allusions, that it was written by an American. It may be well, also, to inform any one who should be so indulgent as to peruse more than a few stanzas, that it was written in America. Still, the political allusions to the Author's native country, which seldom occur, are (except in a few instances) of a general nature, relating to subjects well understood upon both sides of the water. Certain inquisitive readers may, perhaps, be induced to ask—"why, if written in America, was it not also published, there?" To such a demand, the Author has no other reply to make, than that he happens, at this time, to be in London—that he happens to have the production (such as it is) about

him—and that he happens to have caught, while here, the epidemic so very prevalent—a *cacoëthes* for publication.

It has not been the Author's intention, in the tale of Coolanoona, to pourtray the manners and customs of any particular tribe of Indians. The peculiar circumstances in which he was placed prevented his having access to those sources of information, with the assistance of which, he might, perhaps, have been induced to attempt it. If he shall not have misrepresented any of their usages, he will be content—if otherwise, he hopes the inaccuracies may be pardoned.

It will be perceived that the Author has occasionally taken the liberty of adding an Alexandrine to the stanza.

ERRATA.

COOLANOONA. St. CLIV, l. 6, for 'a human face,' read 'a human head.'
St. CLXXI, l. 2, for 'woods,' read 'wood.'

THE SOPORIFIC CANTO.

" Of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye."

THOMPSON.

" And for that I shall tell you, that in ancient times a debate hath risen, and it remains yet unresolved, whether the happiness of man in this world, doth consist more in contemplation or action."

ISAAK WALTON, CHAP. I.

I.

THE bitterest trial to your poet, is
His *entrée* to the ball-room of the Muse,
Where sit the dandy with black whisker'd phiz,
Love pining maids and formidable blues:—
There, (in her quarter's holiday) young Miss
Lisps to Mamma her " quarterly reviews;"
And reads new verses through her quizzing glasses,
Pausing at every line to—eat molasses.(1)

II.

Here, maidens, skill'd in sentimental matters,
Round off each stanza with their "ahs!" and "ohs!"
Then, stop to tear some character to tatters,
To talk of ribbons, poetry and beaux:
The critic, too, his sage opinion scatters,
Made sager by the glasses on his nose;
And worse than all, here struts our youth from college,
Too full of self to have much room for knowledge.

III.

Here, with the Editor your poet meets,
And risks a spattering from a paragraph;
Or, with an extract, if the verse he greets,
'Tis half misquoted and mis-spelt the half:(3)
Here, too, he finds his country friend, who treats
All the productions of the Muse as chaff;
And, here, the youthful writer meets his betters—
The real poet and the man of letters.

IV.

Such an assembly well may quail the eye,
Or cower the youthful heart with hesitation;
Hence, every friend has begg'd me to rely
Upon some influential dedication,
As the best mode of entering,—but I
Hold such a plan in utter detestation,
And, therefore, mean to introduce myself,
Though for that cause I'm laid upon the shelf.

V.

And for the patroness I gladly choose,
Although she be nor titled, proud nor great,
Still, she is young and lovely. If *she* views
These verses that to her I dedicate,
With lenient eye, I hail no fairer muse—
No sweeter smile I deign to supplicate:—
Her brow, the only rainbow of my hope—
Her eye, the brightest star that cheers my horoscope!

VI.

Thus unannounc'd—unfriended, I presume
To step within the circle wide of song,
Where Beauty smiles in all her roseate bloom,
And youth with buoyant ardour bounds along;
Where the dread cynic knits his brow of gloom,
And Satire launches forth her forky tongue:
Though, first, 'twere but politeness to proclaim
My history, my character and name.

VII.

Writers there be abroad,(3) who may remain
Incognito, and win a short-liv'd praise
By dedicating to the *great* their strain:
But, in *this* land, the Public only sways—
That sightless Polyphemus—who would fain
Devour each "Nemo," and destroy his lays,
Though, like Ulysses, he were wise and deep,
Or under covert of our mightiest sheep.

VIII.

O'er works anonymous the learned quarrel,
Foisting them daily upon different men;
A book unown'd is like an empty barrel
Which in its mouth receives each falling rain:
Besides, there's inconvenience and some peril
(Witness the "Man of Feeling") to sustain;(4)
The great Unknown himself could no more wait,
Content with living as the unknown Great.

IX.

The earliest records of our race attest
The importance of a *name*,—as those who've read 'em
Quickly perceive. 'Tis, therein, manifest
That the first faculty bestow'd on Adam
Was that of naming, for both bird and beast
Were nam'd before our common father fed 'em;
And, seeing Eve, before he sought to inflame her
With mutual love, his impulse was to *name* her!

X.

No surer pretext than a name I'd ask,
If celebrated, to effect a scheme ill;
The most envenom'd snake may safely bask
In the meridian sunshine of a name ill:
Junius, of politics the "Iron Mask,"—(5)
That unknown, literary "Peter Schlemihl"—(6)
Who stripp'd the shadow from his real name,
Gain'd, by that shadowy distinction, fame.

XI.

The second Gracchus ow'd his rise and fall
More to his name than any other cause;
The second Adams would not take at all
Among the common people, for the flaws
Alledg'd against his father;—and if all
Could be disgorg'd from Secrecy's dark jaws,
It might be that the *first* Napoleon's name
Abridg'd the *second* of his life and fame.

XII.

So well aware were all the Gods of yore,
Who throng'd Olympus' ivory throne (of snow),
Of a name's weight, that each one took a score,
Or some such number;—Hercules, you know,
Was, also, call'd Alcides,(7) when he bore
His oaken bludgeon,—but we need not go
Beyond our modern Hero whom we dub
"Hickory," when wielding his *reforming* club.

XIII.

Then, if *removal* swell into *abuse*,
They call it cleansing the Augean Stable;
Whilst *he*—that magical Euristheus—(8)
Who rules our Hercules of modern fable,
Seeks the pure, chrystal current to seduce
Of patriotism, once inviolable,
Far from its revolutionary source—
Tainting each ripple of its future course.

XIV.

Such being, then, the importance of a name
In every former age as well as now,
In this my *entrée*, I were sure to blame
Not to announce myself and make my how
Therefore, to ye, gay maiden and grave dame
To dandies, killing with a curl-deck'd brow
To the blotch'd Globe,(9) distended like a frog,
Sitting contented on his monarch Log;—

XV.

To every swell'd toad of the puffing tribe,
Who has *no* jewel in his empty head,
But bears it in his pocket—as a bribe;
To all ye office-hunters that are led
Around the carcase of the State to jibe,
And prowl like hungry jackalls o'er the dead—
Houston,(10) and others *a-la-mode* Mendoza—
I'm—at your service—Vigilus Somnoza.

XVI.

I always was a dreamer. From my birth
I lov'd seclusion from the human kind.
The wildest, gloomiest solitudes of Earth—
Scenes, suited to the musings of a mind
Unform'd for bustle, revelry or mirth,
And all to Fancy's blandishments inclin'd—
Were unto me, next to Sopora's eyes,
All I had ever dreamt of Paradise.

XVII.

My wild imagination, aye, was teeming
With a strange concourse—even when a boy—
Of airy shapes. My passion was in dreaming
Myself the hero of some fancied joy,
Some visionary greatness, or in seeming
Other than what I was. As with a toy,
I play'd with thought, and sported in the bowers
Of Fiction, during childhood's flaxen hours.

XVIII.

No youthful sport, but such as might recall
Some vision of my wakeful slumbers, bore
A charm for me. An apple or a ball
Descending, caus'd me, inly, to live o'er
The star-crown'd mortal's destiny—in all,
To shine forth Newton; and upon the shore
Of the wide, vast, illimitable Deep,
His radiant shells and pebbles bright to heap.

XIX.

Each pleasure boat that mov'd with pliant oar,
Launch'd me some Cook or Parry of the Ocean;
While every childish cannon's feeble roar
Hail'd me Napoleon on the throne of Notion;
Each humming top's long-ton'd and whirling snore
Craz'd me with visions of perpetual motion;
And I became, to view the kite high-dangling,
A new edition of Promethean Franklin.[11]

XX.

Thus did my soul, through childhood's winged days,
Dwell in itself; and if at times it found
Some pleasure on surrounding forms to gaze,
'Twas evanescent as the charm of sound,
Or as some crystal liquid in a vase,
Reflecting pictures of the scene around,
Which, spilt, will first assume an earthly hue,
And then exhale to heaven's aerial blue.

XXI.

And yet, as years advanc'd, I but became
The more reserv'd in manner as in mind:
Courted by some, by others mark'd with blame,
Still, my sequester'd stream of life would wind,
Like Arethusa's fount of classic fame,
To shun the rougher current of my kind;—
Still, like the wife renown'd for virtuous schemes,
I wove but to reweave my web of dreams.

XXII.

I found that, e'en in deepest solitudes,
The charm of Nature would a lustre fling
O'er all my thoughts and images. Brooks, woods,
The glorious scenes of Autumn and of Spring
Arous'd gay Fancy to her sprightliest moods,
Brighten'd her eye, gave wildness to her wing,
Infus'd new boldness in her guiding hand,
And added powers of magic to her wand.

XXIII.

I lov'd beside the cataract to roam,
And pour my soul forth with the swelling flood;
To mark the varied arch bestride the foam,
Like him, whose vesture will be ting'd with blood,
And who, upon the courser white will come
Treading the wine-press of his wrath. All dumb,[12]
I clung upon the beetling precipice
Or sought the dark, deep bosom of the abyss.

XXIV.

Or, if some milder mood my fancy took,
I lov'd to loiter on the verdant mead;
To dream myself, o'er some romantic book,
The hero of the tale I chanc'd to read;
Or else to listen to the eloquent brook,
Whose voice, like Athens' orator, would plead
More musically 'mid its pebbly sand,
And the rapt soul with melody expand.

XXV.

The calls of life, the urgency of friends—
(Your dreamy gentry all have friends to urge 'em)
Pass'd by unheeded; or, to gain my ends,
In visions, sometimes, I contriv'd to merge 'em—
Though, if importunate, I'd make amends,
And with the lash of satire strive to scourge 'em;
On which, they left me to my dreams unreal—
The vapoury hero of a realm ideal.

XXVI.

At times, obsequious crowds collecting fast,
Would fill this mental realm with warlike hum;
Then, would I rouse them with the trumpet's blast
Or with the rattling of the martial drum:
O'er Alleganies—o'er huge Alps they pass'd,
And only met their foes to overcome,
And overcame to succour; for a hero
Never was great by imitating Nero.

XXVII.

And the result of such resort to arms
  Was that most fitted to a youthful mind—
The establishment of peace and peaceful charms,
  And I became a blessing to my kind:
Nor did I ever seek by war's alarms—
  (That clanking chain) man's liberty to bind,
Nor to impose upon my country more liens,
As did the grizly hero of N—w O——ns!

XXVIII.

Such dreams would change: I roam'd, at other times,
  A Theseus through the labyrinth of Love,
Painting the Ariadne of my rhymes
  In those deep, glowing, sanguine tints, which prove
That youth's carnation morn but slowly climbs
  Above life's dark horizon,—that we move,
At first, in a false dawn of ideality
And find it but the haze of dim reality.

XXIX.

But all our *dreams* are bright! Oh! even yet,
  I see the image of those long, dark curls
Catch struggling sunbeams in their glossy net,
  And clasp a face in their meandering twirls
Like a bright cameo begirt with jet:
  And, then, those lips with blazonry of pearls,
Smiling a soul upon that lovely face—
(But hold—I'm now becoming common-place.)

XXX.

Then, in my varying visions would succeed
Soft, melting griefs and unexpected partings,
Bosoms that heave, and aching hearts that bleed,
Eyes coining sadness, and the sudden dartings
Of Cupid's piercing weapon, and, at need,
The advice of friends or raillery's keen smartings,
With all the miseries that set us frantic,
Found in a love delightfully romantic.

XXXI.

Now, I was whirl'd into the deep abyss
Of a refusal positive; and, now,
A smile would elevate me into bliss,
Embody all the monkey in a bow,
Or turtle in the endearment of a kiss;
Then, came the fervour of a lover's vow—
That cold, but warming sunglass of the heart,
All kindling but the asbestos of a flirt.

XXXII.

Sometimes, I caught myself in tears dissolv'd
Over some tragical catastrophy;
Sometimes, with mighty sentences, involv'd
In words, I rais'd to love a vast trophy;
And, then, with tone dramatic, I evolv'd
A fine, theatrical apostrophe:
And all these luscious dreams were mix'd with trances,
Poutings, and squabblings, and Parthian glances.

XXXIII.

So much for love:—At length, I ventur'd near
The Eldorado bright of Matrimony;
Then, for the endearing names of "love" and "dear,"
Methought I dwindled down to simple "honey;"
And, for the lips clear smack, naught met the ear
But gingling and the counting out of money—
Nay—I forget, (my verse is so bewildring)
There might be heard the charming squalls of children!

XXXIV.

The scene would change—and o'er the realms of yore,
My tireless soul would wander forth alone,
With the devoted Alchemist to pore,
And find at last the philosophic stone:
Yet would the secret, from the love I bore
The finance of the world, remain my own;
And I grew wealthy like Girard, the old,(13)
Whose Midas touch turned every thing to gold.

XXXV.

Gay, sumptuous gardens, here and there, were spread
Over the loveliest landscapes of the nation;
And soon arose (but long ere I was dead)
Structures for charity and education;
And I permitted none but clergy-bred
Within the premises to hold vocation;
And I became—(thanks to my flattering pate)
As great as rich, and good as I was great.

XXXVI.

The vision fled: I ventur'd next to roam
A weary pilgrim in a desert land,—
Far, in some scorching wilderness, from home,
Barefooted on the hot and piercing sand,
With parched tongue and blistering lip of foam:—
But, lo! the enchantress Fancy waves her wand!—
In Niger's source, my toil-worn limbs I dip,
Or Nile's clear fountain offers to my lip.

XXXVII.

'Twas thus from youth I dream'd myself to man.—
I was an only child. Long, in my race,
From sire to son, a patrimony ran
Of vast fertility and ample space.—
I valued it as though 'twere but a span
Of useless earth: To me, the only place
Cherish'd was in the mind:—no portal's state
To me so grand as Vision's ivory gate.

XXXVIII.

Yet, once, by the entreaties of a sire,
Proud and aspiring, I was led to seek
The fashionable circle, and acquire
The newest modes to think and move and speak,—
To study all the importance of attire,
And learn that mystic canon of intrigue—
To pluck a flower wherever I could cull it,
And clear my reputation with a bullet.